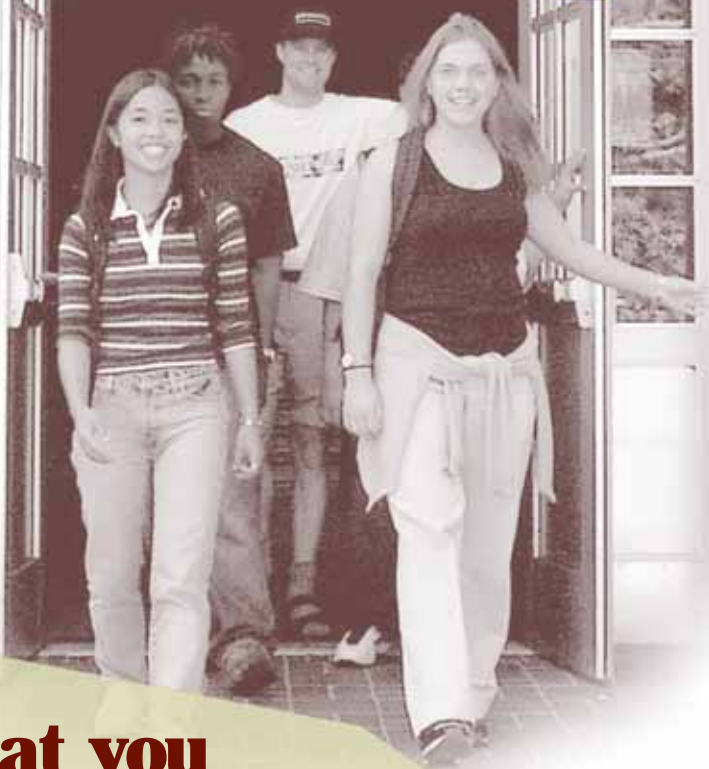


Off to College?



What you should know about meningococcal disease:

- Meningococcal (me-nin-je-kok-ul) disease is a serious illness caused by bacteria that can infect the blood or areas around the brain and spinal cord. Infection can lead to brain damage, disability, and rapid death.
- Meningitis is the most common form of meningococcal disease. Common **symptoms of meningitis** include stiff neck, headache, and high fever.
- College freshmen, particularly those who live in dorms, are more likely to get the disease. About 100 cases occur on U.S. college campuses each year.
- Meningococcal vaccine can protect against four of the five most common groups of bacteria that cause meningococcal disease.

The meningococcal conjugate vaccine is recommended for college freshmen living in dorms.



Before you start college, make sure you are up-to-date on all your shots.

College Immunization Checklist:

- ☐ **MMR** (measles, mumps, rubella)
- ☐ **Tdap** (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis)
- ☐ **Varicella** (chickenpox)
- ☐ **Hepatitis B**
- ☐ **HPV** (human papillomavirus)
—for women only
- ☐ **Meningococcal**

Some of these are recommended and others required for enrollment.

Students in On-Campus Housing:

I have reviewed this information and...

- ☐ **I received** the meningococcal vaccine on / / Date
- ☐ **I intend** to receive meningococcal vaccine.
- ☐ **I do not** intend to receive meningococcal vaccine.

Printed Name

Birthdate / /

Signature

Date / /

Return signed form to: 



How Many People Get the Disease?

Meningococcal disease is rare. An estimated 1,400 to 2,800 people get meningococcal disease each year in the U.S. (about 1 case for every 100,000 people), with 200 to 400 of them in California. Of the 16 million U.S. college students, about 100 get meningococcal disease each year.

How Serious Is It?

Even if treated, 10–15% of people who get meningococcal disease will die from it. Of the survivors, 11–19% lose their arms or legs, become deaf or brain damaged, or suffer other complications.

"It could happen to anyone. Get immunized."

—Jonathan Deguzman
meningococcal disease survivor



How Are Meningococcal Bacteria Spread?

The bacteria are spread from person to person through air droplets. Close contact such as kissing, coughing, smoking, and living in crowded conditions (like dorms) can increase your risk of getting the disease.

Overall, 5–10% of the U.S. population has the meningococcal bacteria in their throat, but only a few of them get sick. No one knows why some people get sick and others don't.

How Can I Protect Myself?

You can protect yourself by:

- not sharing items that have touched someone else's mouth, such as cups, bottles, cigarettes, lip balm, and eating utensils;
- not smoking; and
- getting the meningococcal conjugate vaccine. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends it for freshmen living in dormitories and for all 11–18 year olds at the earliest opportunity.

How Effective Are the Vaccines?

There are 2 types of vaccine that protect against meningococcal disease. They are at least 85% effective at preventing 4 of the 5 most common forms of meningococcal disease.

The newer of the two vaccines, called meningococcal conjugate vaccine, is the preferred type for those 2–55 years of age. It is expected to provide long-lasting protection and should also help to prevent the disease from spreading. Ask your health care provider about the benefits and risks of this vaccine.

For more information:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/vaccines

American College Health Association: www.acha.org/info_resources

Ask your healthcare provider or student health service!